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SC-10411/65
27 August 1965

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Current Intelligence

THROUGH : Acting Chief, Sino-Soviet Bloc Area

FROM : Acting Chief, China and Asian Satellites Division

SUBJECT : Preliminary Evaluation of [] Mission 455C Flown on 24 August 1965

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1. This mission covered areas of South and South-east China and a few targets in North Vietnam. It was the first [] mission to be flown in this area since 2 July and covered some targets which had not been covered since 27 May. A large number of military targets including airfields, barracks areas, supply depots, naval bases, and several urban complexes were covered. Apart from some new air order-of-battle information, nothing of major significance was reported in the field readout. No new missile sites were disclosed.

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2. Seven reactions comprising a minimum of eight jet fighters were noted responding to this mission. At least five of these reactions were in the Nanning/Ningming area, one in the Canton area, and another probably from Hsingning or Leiyang. Three of the reacting jets noted in the Nanning area were using "boom mike" transmitters which is indicative of MIG-21 fighters. Although one of the MIG-21s was noted at a reported altitude of over 65,000 feet there is no indication in the tracking reports that any of the reacting aircraft sighted the mission aircraft.

Air Installations

3. Eleven airfields were photographed. The most important of these were Canton/Nanhai, Nanning South, and Ningming. Several important air order-of-battle changes were noted. The mission disclosed 40 MIG-15/17 jet fighters and 5 small unidentified liaison aircraft there. Official air-order-of-battle figures

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for the field as of 27 August listed 57 MIG-15/17s and 22 MIG-19s. At Nanning South, one of the most important tactical fields in the area, the mission disclosed 3 MIG-21s, 23 MIG-19s (1 dismantled), 9 MIG-15/17s and three light aircraft. The official air-order-of-battle credits Nanning with 6 MIG-21s 21 MIG-19s, and 48 MIG-15/17s. The figures for the high performance MIG-21s (note that several were airborne inreaction to the mission in addition to the three photographed) and the MIG-19s checks out well, but there has apparently been a significant reduction in the number of MIG-15/17s. At Ningming this mission disclosed an increase in the number of jet fighters--33. The AOB credits Ningming with 27 possible MIG-19s. The photography indicates that all the aircraft at Ningming are the older MIG-15/17 types. Ningming was only recently activated.

Naval Bases

4. The Shantou Naval Base and the Huangpu Naval Base were both covered. There was no evidence of submarines. The field reports a probable RIGA class DE at Huangpu but we believe this to be the South Sea Fleet flagship which is in fact a much smaller Kaiboken class PF. All of the RIGAs have traditionally operated in the East and North Sea Fleet areas and have never been in South Sea Fleet waters.

Military Barracks Areas

5. About a dozen important military barracks areas and supply depots were photographed but no significant activity was discernible. It is again pointed out, however, that photographic coverage of military barracks areas generally does not produce intelligence on the level of activity at these installations.

Other Installations

6. The Ningming railyard and the Pinghsiang Ordnance Depot were both covered. Both are near the North Vietnamese border. Poor quality photography precluded a detailed interpretation of the Ningming railyard and no unusual activity was reported at the Pinghsiang Ordnance Depot.

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7. Two airfields in North Vietnam were covered. These were Haiphong/Cat Bi and Hanoi Gia Lam. At both installations the photography was too poor to permit a detailed readout. Several other targets in north-eastern North Vietnam were covered including sections of the Hanoi-Langson rail line and various installations along this route but nothing of major significance was reported.

Prepared by:

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